

(COVERED)
Smith's Bridge
Beaver Valley near Wilmington, Del.
New Castle Co.

HABS No. Del-1

HABS
DEL.

2. 30. 1914

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of Delaware

Historic American Buildings Survey
Weston H. Blake , District Officer
1301 Market Street, Wilmington, Del.

SMITH'S BRIDGE
Beaver Valley near Wilmington Del.

Owner: State Highway Department of Delaware
Tenth and King Streets, Wilmington Del.

Date of Erection: 1839

Architect: Not Known

Builder: Not Known

There is no mention in the record of the Levy Court of New Castle County regarding the designer of the bridge or who did the actual construction work. The bridge was built under the direction of a committee of the Levy Court composed of James Brindley, James Thompson and Jacob Porter.

Present Condition: In good condition. Not on a highway frequented by heavy traffic and therefore not subjected to unusual wear and tear. The "German Siding" is probably not the original type siding used on the walls of the structure.

Number of Stories: One

Materials of Construction: The foundations and abutments are stone, dashed and whitewashed, except under the bridge at each end, at which places the stonework is pointed. Concrete footings have been placed under these foundations at a fairly recent date. The structural timbers are white pine, the floor planks oak, random widths averaging about 12 inches wide by 2½ inches thick. Wood shingles cover the roof.

Other Existing Records: No records concerning this particular bridge have been found other than those contained in the minutes of the Levy Court of New Castle County.

Additional Data: The first bridge was built at this location on the Brandywine in 1816. It was built on piers and was washed away by a freshet about six years later. Several bridges of this same type were built and destroyed by freshets before the present one was built in 1839.

These earlier structures were also known as Smith's Bridge and are referred to in Scharf's History of Delaware, as is also the old grist mill known as Smith's Mills which stood at the east approach, and to which the south abutment at this end connected. The foundations of these mills are still in evidence, as is some of the mill equipment. The following regarding the construction

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of the present bridge is quoted verbatim from the minutes of the Levy Court of New Castle County under date of December 1839.

The Committee on the Bridge at Smith's Mills on Brandywine, report that the bridge is completed and finished in a workman like and substantial manner agreeable to contract. The Masonary of the abutments is principally of large stone, the old piers have been taken down and the stone re-built in the wings of the abutments which has left a free passage for the stream, and this bridge standing four feet higher than the late bridge stood, and well fastened with iron to the abutments, will render it secure from a much greater freshet than has ever been remembered on the Brandywine. The Committee have increased the bill of masonry much more than was at first contemplated in the length and thickness of the walls, depth of foundations, and from a desire of making a permanent job, that will probably not require any repairs more than occasionally covering the ground wall for a century or more. Mr. Isaac Smith, has contracted with the committee to complete the filling of the abutments at twenty five cents per cubic yards, he will not be able to finish it this winter, but he has made the passage on and off the bridge tolerably easy. His bill will probably amount to from one hundred and fifty to one hundred and seventy five dollars.

Length of Bridge $154\frac{1}{2}$ feet	@ $.16\frac{1}{2}$	\$ 2,549.25
283 yards of filling by Taylor & Windle	@ .125	70.75
Covering ground wall with white pine board		30.00
Contractor's bill of masonwork 1437 perches @		
1.95 per perch		2,803.32
Total		\$ 5,453.32
Committee measure 1331 perch @ 1.95 per perch		
(Deduct)		206.70
		\$ 5,246.62
Smith's bill of filling		200.00
		\$ 5,446.62
Appropriated by Levy Court		3,000.00
(The balance of which an extra appropriation		\$ 2,446.62
has to be made. Balance of appropriation		
made and passed by the Committee.)		

Heston H. Blake
District Officer

Reviewed July 8th '36. T.W.